



MARCH 12, 2010 – MARCH 25, 2010

Bringing You Good News

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 16

Timely Tidbits ...**Rep's Local Office Closed**

A local office maintained in Taylor City Hall by State Representative Douglas A. Geiss was closed effective March 1. Romulus and Taylor residents who need assistance may contact Geiss at his Lansing office by calling toll-free: 888-REP-GEISS.

Foreclosure Prevention

State Representative Douglas A. Geiss says he has compiled resources for individuals facing tax foreclosure.

"My colleagues and I in the Wayne County Caucus are working with the Wayne County Treasurer's Office to contact homeowners before it is too late," Geiss stated.

Romulus and Taylor individuals and families who owe property taxes from 2007 or before are facing tax foreclosure on March 31, 2010. According to Geiss, members of his office are contacting these people to provide assistance.

For more information about tax or mortgage foreclosure prevention, call Geiss toll-free: 888-REP-GEISS.

Dingell Urges Residents To Participate in Census

Congressman John D. Dingell (D-MI15) is strongly urging people across the country to participate in the 2010 census to ensure an accurate and complete count.

"The importance of correctly filling out and returning the Census form cannot be overstated," he said. "First, data from the Census directly affects how more than \$400 billion in federal funds are spent, at all levels of government, and thus, helps determine how and what resources are allocated to a community. ..."

"Second, the data from the Census dictates how the U.S. House of Representatives is reapportioned, how each state is redistricted, and how the Electoral College is distributed. I don't need to remind my constituents of the importance of ensuring they are properly represented on the federal, state, and local levels."

Dingell noted that filling out the Census form is fast (taking most just 10 minutes to fill out the 10 simple questions) and safe (the information is treated by law as confidential). □

Romulus Paves Way for Advanced Battery Maker Project, New Jobs

The City of Romulus has opened the way for A123 Systems, a leading global advanced battery maker, to launch an investment project that is expected to create hundreds of local jobs and make Romulus a center for 21st-century energy technology.

"This is an exciting new era for Romulus and our citizens – to be a center for new auto technology that can put Michigan back to work and help our nation become more energy independent," said Romulus Mayor Alan R. Lambert. "We applaud A123 Systems, Romulus City Council members, Governor Jennifer Granholm and her team, Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, Congressman John Dingell, and state and federal leaders for working together at all stages [to] make this possible."

"Romulus is proud to do our part, and provide the skilled workers Michigan needs to become a leader once again in today's global economy," he added.

At its March 8 meeting, the Romulus City Council approved 15 years of tax breaks for A123 Systems, which is one of the world's leaders in battery technology vital to making automobiles more energy efficient. The company, based in Massachusetts, is establishing a production facility at Ecorse and Cogswell roads to house the company's proprietary powder, coating, and electrode production operations.

A statement issued by the City earlier

this week indicated that construction, upgrades, and other capital projects are expected to begin this year, and the facility is expected to start operations in late 2010 or early 2011. Upgrades and other work will continue at the facility through 2013.

The A123 Systems facility is expected to create more than 370 local jobs by 2011. The company is expected to invest at least \$132 million in the Romulus project, which will include development on more than 21 acres of land, with construction and other upgrades on 287,000 square feet of industrial space that A123 Systems has already leased.

The Romulus plant will be part of A123 Systems' Michigan production network that will encompass the full production process, from the manufacture of battery powder and cells to the fabrication of battery cells and modules, which would be assembled into complete battery pack systems for vehicles.

The A123 Systems Romulus plant is being funded by more than \$249 million in U.S. Department of Energy grants for the production of automotive-class lithium ion batteries; loans and tax credits from the Michigan Economic Growth Authority and the Michigan Strategic Fund; and equity raised from A123 Systems' initial public offering.

All funding is already in place. □

Basham, Senate Dems Propose "Bank" To Create Jobs, Protect Consumers

State Senator Ray Basham (D-Taylor) and the Michigan Senate Democrats have unveiled a proposal that would create a Michigan Development Bank – an institution intended to keep residents' money in Michigan and put it to work to stimulate the economy, create jobs through increased business lending, and protect consumers with reasonable interest rates on loans.

"The Michigan Development Bank would serve as an innovative way to revive our economy and pump some much-needed money back into our state," said Basham. "... [R]unning our own financial institution would help ensure our money stays in our state by providing loans to businesses to grow in Michigan and create good-paying jobs for our workers."

According to Basham, the Michigan Development Bank would be structured like a traditional financial institution, but

would operate differently, with an increased emphasis on economic development rather than profits. The proposal will take money invested by Michigan residents and use it to reinvigorate the economy by offering:

- *small-business loans* to generate economic activity, help companies get off the ground and grow, and create jobs.
- *low-interest credit cards* to assist struggling consumers with bills and purchases without charging excessive rates that perpetuate a cycle of debt, and allow consumers to roll over current credit card debt to a state credit card.
- *low-interest student loans* to help Michigan families afford a higher education while limiting the overwhelming debt they face following graduation.
- *agricultural loan programs* to continue to support one of Michigan's most

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Portis Is Taylor's New Fire Chief

Taylor Fire Chief Steve Portis

Steve Portis, a 20-year veteran of the Taylor Fire Department, has been appointed chief of the 60-member unit.

Portis, one of five candidates for the position, was appointed by Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand, confirmed on March 2 by City Council, and sworn in by City Clerk Mary Ann Rilley. Portis succeeds Vince Fedel, who retired on March 3 (see story on page 8) and was honored with a plaque from local elected officials.

The Mayor noted that the new chief's annual salary is \$10,000 less than Fedel's, his fringe benefit package has been reduced, and he will be working without a deputy chief. Deputy Ed Sierota has exercised his right to return to the ranks of the department, and the position will not be filled.

Lamarand added that, with the City facing the challenge of reducing the budget by an estimated \$10 million in the 2010/2011 fiscal year that begins July 1, all of his new department head appointees are working for less than their predecessors – and further concessions are anticipated.

At age 40, Portis is the youngest fire chief in Taylor history. Fedel was 41 when he was appointed chief more than four years ago.

"I think Steve was the best fit to maintain a healthy line of communication between the administration and the Fire Department," Mayor Lamarand said. "Everybody – including other candidates – has acknowledged Steve's ability to lead. I believe

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Letters to the Editor

Cut the Fat Before Cutting Workers' Wages

To the Editor:

Romulus Mayor Alan Lambert recently stated that tightening our belts is nothing new.

Taylor Mayor Jeffrey Lamarand has just taken a 15% pay cut, from \$102,151 to \$86,828. It's my understanding that Mayor Lambert wants everyone to take a 5% pay cut across the board. I feel that Mayor Lambert should take a 15% pay cut, the same as Mayor Lamarand. If Mayor Lambert takes only a 5% pay cut, he will still be making approximately \$90,000 – but a 5% pay cut across the board will have a much bigger impact on the average hourly employee struggling to support his/her family.

Mayor Lambert's belt has a few notches that could be tightened up. He should give up driving a City vehicle for personal use, reimbursing the City at just 5.5¢ per mile. This is approximately \$1 per gallon of gas, leaving the taxpayers to pick up the balance. He is the first mayor in the history of Romulus to drive a City vehicle for personal use.

Another waste of money is allowing Department of Public Works director Tom Wilson to drive a 4WD City pickup with a V8 engine to and from Hartland – approximately 100 miles per day – at taxpayers' expense, costing over \$100 per week for gas. Since the City is on hard times, I feel that Mr. Wilson should drive his own vehicle to and from work, and drive the City vehicle only during work hours. How many other employees are we providing with City vehicles that taxpayers pick up the tab on?

Again, Mayor Lambert is asking everyone to tighten their belts. The residents of Romulus have been doing that for years. A number of residents lost their homes to foreclosure, lost their jobs, took pay cuts, and lost benefits, and Mayor Lambert wants to ask them for a two-mill tax increase in August. Residents want a tax *decrease*, not an increase.

We are going to have a school millage

election in May, asking for more tax dollars. In August, the Mayor wants to ask for a City tax increase in an election that will cost taxpayers approximately \$14,000. Three months later, we'll have another election for state officials – and, again, the taxpayers will foot the bill. Why is the City's request for more taxes not added to the November ballot to save the taxpayers money?

Mayor Lambert needs to realize that there is a lot more fat that we can trim at the top before we go to the bottom, where the lowest-paid City jobs are. I heard that he gave City employees an ultimatum to take a 5% pay cut, along with some benefits, or face a layoff of 40 to 50 workers. Does this include laying off some appointed positions?

Remember: Leadership is leading by example.

Harry Crout
Romulus

Board's Crout Replies to Colleague's Commentary

To the Editor:

I feel I must respond to Romulus Community Schools Board of Education trustee Robert McLachlan's "Guest Commentary," which appeared in the February 26 issue of *the little paper*.

As a fellow Board member, I feel that Board meetings, not the newspaper, are the appropriate place for school discussion – but, clearly, Mr. McLachlan does not agree.

Due to today's economy and State cuts to education, I truly appreciate the efforts of the district's Redesign Committee. It will be necessary to think out of the box and come up with ideas for cost savings or make drastic cuts. I'm saddened that Mr. McLachlan prefers to write letters than converse with other Board members.

It was clear that the Board would not make any decisions on the Redesign Committee's recommendations before hearing

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Senate Dems Propose Development Bank

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important industries, and help farmers rebound from the economic crisis.

Senate Democrats propose establishing the Michigan Development Bank with an economic development bond that will have to be approved by voters. The general rule, said Basham, is that, for every \$100 deposited, a bank can lend \$900. According to his rough estimate, the Michigan Development Bank could, with an initial capitalization of \$150 million, lend up to one billion dollars.

A statement from Basham's office noted, "The Senate Democrats' Michigan Development Bank proposal is patterned

after the highly successful Bank of North Dakota. Michigan has been hit hard by the nation's economic downturn, with the unemployment rate at 14% and a projected state budget deficit of over \$1.5 billion. In this current recession, North Dakota has continued to add jobs and balance its budget, primarily because it keeps its money in North Dakota.

"North Dakota regularly puts between \$50 and \$60 million back into its General Fund," it continued. "When you consider that North Dakota's economy is ten times smaller than Michigan's, a conservative estimate is that we could generate \$500 million for our state's General Fund." □

Portis Is Taylor's New Fire Chief

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Steve was the best person to help me work through the financial challenges the City is facing and still maintain the highest quality fire and EMS response."

Chief Portis called the appointment "an honor" and said he is ready for the challenges that come with the position.

"I want to be able to provide great service to the citizens, but as chief at this time I also want to be a leader in the department," he explained. "It's an honor to lead the men and women we have in the Fire Department right now. We have a great bunch of people, and the city is lucky to have them. It is an honor to serve the citizens of Taylor, as well."

Portis wanted to be a firefighter since he was a child because of the excitement that comes with the job. He joined the Fire Department 20 years ago as a part-time auxiliary firefighter. Six years later, when the City expanded service to provide full-time advanced life support, he was one of many who became full-time firefighters.

Portis had been a fire medic, sergeant, and lieutenant prior to his promotion to captain in 1999. As captain, he was in charge of the interior command at Fire Station 3 on Eureka Road, and responded to fires and medical emergencies. Many of the firefighters' runs at that station are to senior housing centers.

Portis graduated from fire academy, and was an emergency medical technician

when he was hired into the department. Firefighter training is continuous; most recently, he graduated from the Eastern Michigan University School of Fire Staff and Command.

Ever since he became a full-time firefighter, Portis has been a trustee in the Taylor Professional Firefighters Union, and served as vice president for five years. He said serving as a union officer gave him experience in reviewing budgets, negotiations, and discipline – all of which will be useful to him as chief.

Portis noted that helping the Mayor reduce the budget deficit while maintaining high-quality personnel to respond to fire and rescue runs will be his top priorities.

"From the elected officials to the Fire Department to the Police Department and all City employees, our main boss is the citizens," Portis said. "I want to maintain the quality of service to our citizens. My goal is to have the best Fire Department our city can have."

The Taylor native has a wife, Tracy, and a daughter, Madisyn. □

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Guest Commentary

McLachlan: Millage Support "Essential"

By Robert W. McLachlan, Trustee, Romulus Community Schools Board of Education

On February 22, the Romulus Board of Education voted unanimously to approve millage proposals to be placed on the May 4, 2010 Annual School Election ballot. **I fully support these proposals**, and feel the need to communicate to the residents of Romulus why, given my particular scrutiny of the last election's millage proposal. (The previous proposal, in my opinion, had language that would have usurped the intention of the Headlee Amendment by authorizing an amount higher than that allowable to be assessed by law, and I felt that was somewhat misleading.)

The proposals being brought to you in May are absolutely essential to the operation of the school district, as they represent more than a third of our budget. Failure of these proposals is not an option, as our district would not be viable without funding.

Of course, the district's administration will do its part to communicate the message of the Board of Education regarding the millage. With that said, I am speaking here as an individual who happens to be on the Board. I am fully aware that I am not the spokesperson for the Board. However, many readers of the *little paper* have told me that they appreciate my willingness to communicate my positions on matters concerning the schools, and I view representative government as one where all communicate freely and openly.

The two proposals that are being put before the voters in May are much clearer with regard to statutory language and intent. The first proposal, which contains two sections, seeks to continue our authorization to levy operating millage. **It is not new tax.** "Part one" is the renewal of the "non-homestead" levy of 18 mils, beginning in 2012. Currently, we are authorized for this millage, but, due to the Headlee Amendment, it has been "rolled back" to 17.49 mils. In 2012, when the continuation begins, that levy would rise to the full 18 mils. This is a very small increase, which is not paid by homeowners. This is the tax that applies to commercial property.

"Part two" is the renewal, or continuation, of the *authorization* to levy 16.63 "homestead" or "hold harmless" mils. It is important to point out that the district currently is at this "authorization" level. However, due to State of Michigan law, we are limited as to how much we can levy under this authorization. There is a formula, used by the State, that uses property value and, in this instance, most importantly, student enrollment, to determine what we may locally assess. Currently, we are assessing 6.4432 mils.

The trend of declining enrollment is, unfortunately, something we will likely deal with for several years to come, as southeast

Michigan continues to struggle with the economic realities we are now facing. Our student population would have to skyrocket to allow even a modest increase in this levy. It is important that voters understand the difference between *authorized* and *assessed* rates. While we may be authorized to levy a particular millage, state laws, such as the Headlee Amendment and the school aid formula, control how much we may actually levy. Each year, as part of the budget process, the Board of Education must hold a public "Truth in Taxation" hearing, where we inform the residents of the assessment(s) for the following year, based upon all the factors I have mentioned.

Simply stated, with declining property values and declining enrollment, Romulus residents will *not* see an increase in their taxes with this proposal.

The second proposal refers to the sinking fund the voters approved two years ago. The district made a commitment to lower the debt levy by .75 mils to 6.25 mils if this fund was approved, which in fact happened. A facilities study was performed by professionals, and our maintenance needs are much greater than what the .75-mil levy will provide. The district is seeking a maximum "authorization" of 5 mils, or an increase in the current authorization in the amount of 4.25 mils. However, the commitment being made to voters is that the *only* increase in the sinking fund levy would be from the reduction(s) forced on the "homestead" or "hold harmless" millage stated above. In other words, if the State requires that we lower the "hold harmless" millage by a particular amount, the district is seeking to "capture" that reduction and use that toward the sinking fund. In actuality, the "capture" would be tax-neutral. There would be no increase to taxpayers; it would just allow the district the flexibility to collect those funds and use them for our facility maintenance as prescribed by law. It is important to note that, in no case can "sinking fund" money be used for salaries, buyouts, benefits, etc.

Again, I support the passage of both of these proposals, as they are essential to the proper operation of Romulus Community Schools. Many of you are aware of my criticisms of some of the policies and practices of the district, but I cannot allow the children in the community to be used as pawns in a battle of wills over budget decisions. *I urge all Romulus voters to support both of these proposals on the May 4 ballot.*

In closing, as always, I am happy to meet with any Romulus resident to discuss my positions on the millage, or any other school district matter. Simply email me at rmlachlan917@comcast.net or visit my Web site, www.rmlachlan.com, and I will contact you. □

Guest Commentary

Bold Decisions for Challenging Times

Redesign of RCS, Approval of Millage Proposals Go Hand-in-Hand

By Carl J. Weiss, Superintendent, Romulus Community Schools

Like many school districts across Michigan, the Romulus Community Schools struggles with two challenges: inconsistent/inadequate funding from Lansing and declining enrollment. Despite these challenges, we are working hard to continue to meet the educational needs of our children.

The fact remains, however, that the community is significantly smaller than it was five years ago. Because our public schools are here to support today's community, they must continue to change and adapt if we are to effectively meet our educational needs while using our resources wisely. This will mean that we restructure our locally generated tax revenue and reduce the number of school buildings that house our K-12 instructional program.

Shortly after the 2009-10 school year began, I worked with district administrators to develop a Redesign Plan for the consideration of our Board of Education. The goal of the redesign process was to involve all Romulus Community Schools stakeholders in a careful review of our current educational program, then prepare recommendations for improvement and present them to the Board of Education. The Board would then review the recommendations in early 2010 and determine which, if any, to pursue.

The redesign process was developed as a way to hear community and staff input that will assist the Board in planning the district's future. In November, Director of Business Sherri Papazoglou and Director of Human Resources Jim Baker formed the Romulus Community Schools Redesign Committee. This committee was comprised of district and building administrators, teachers and support staff, union leadership, and parents. The committee met over a span of three months to review the district's current K-12 configuration, building usage, and course offerings, and then explore ways to make our educational program stronger with the resources available to us. The outcome of this project was a list of recommendations that were submitted to and approved by the Board of Education earlier this month.

The Redesign Committee's recommendations were shared with our parents and community members at a Town Hall meeting on February 18. The Board of Education listened to questions and concerns for over two hours that night. Prior to approving the Redesign Plan on March 8, the school board insisted that district administrators continue to be mindful of parent concerns, and make sure that the transition to the 2010-11 school year allows for the continued academic and emotional suc-

cess of our children by providing the best program our resources can support.

The Redesign Plan will occur in two phases. The first phase, which will take effect in the 2010-11 school year, will merge Merriman and Halecreek elementary schools at Halecreek, merge Cory and Wick elementary schools at Wick, and make Romulus Middle School into a building that houses grades six through eight. Phase II of the Redesign Plan, which is scheduled to take effect the following school year, will repurpose the Merriman School site into the home of the Community High and Community Middle schools, and expand the preschool and child-care program at the Cory School site.

By reducing the number of K-12 buildings operated by the district, we will be able to concentrate financial resources to enhance our instructional program with the following:

- greater academic support for elementary school students through the district's Title 1 program;
- more efficient utilization of teachers to balance class sizes;
- the addition of a foreign-language program at the elementary level;
- a special sixth-grade "school within a school" experience that houses students in a separate part of the middle school, and provides a program totally unique to the needs of our sixth-graders;
- a comprehensive instrumental music program for sixth-graders; and
- opportunities for middle school students to earn high school credit through the E2020 program.

It is essential that our schools continue to support our community by preparing our youngsters for successful futures. As we move toward the May 4 election date, I urge you to support our schools by taking steps to secure the financial resources we need to operate. □



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Taylor Police Searching for Bank Robber



Taylor police are looking for this man, who robbed a Charter One Bank.

Taylor police are searching for a man who robbed a Charter One Bank branch at gunpoint on February 25.

Lieutenant Mary Sclabassi reported that, at about 10:10 a.m., a man entered the bank – located in the 21000 block of Ecorse Road – and pulled out a dark-colored pistol, ordering two tellers to put money on the counter. He left with \$1,900 in \$20 bills and smaller denominations.

Police believe the man may have been responsible for a robbery at the same bank

in December.

The robber is described as a white male, approximately late 30s to early 40s, wearing Carhart-type overalls, a dark sweatshirt with a hood, and a mask covering his face. He also wore dark sunglasses.

Video surveillance showed that he got into a dark green, older model (late 1980s or early '90s) Dodge Dakota pickup truck.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Taylor Police at 734-287-6611 or Detective Nick Hill at 734-374-1402. □

Crout Replies to Colleague's Commentary

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from residents. Last month's Town Hall meeting was intended to get public input to see what they thought of the committee's plan. It gave me an opportunity to listen to their responses. Why would we spend resources gathering data and cost analyses if residents would not support the changes? Does Mr. McLachlan have a better plan he hasn't shared?

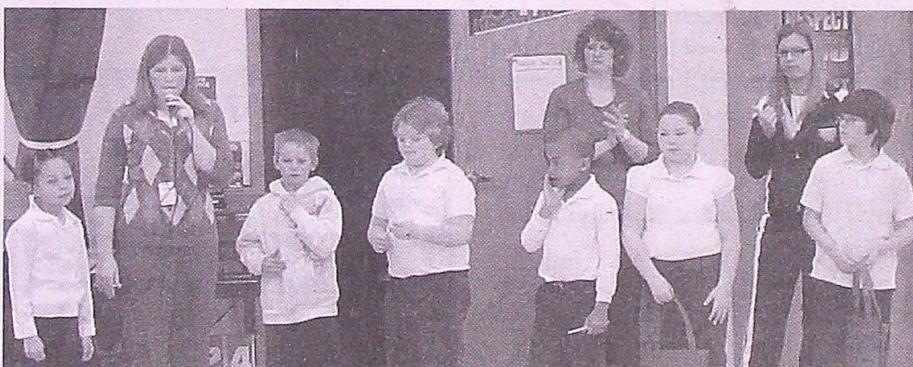
I personally do not want to see sixth-

graders moved to the middle school, and am pleased that others share my view.

Another of my concerns is how we can eliminate the "limited school-of-choice" option, which many residents would like to see. Can this be accomplished by consolidating schools and changing the districting boundaries?

Sandra Crout, Secretary
Romulus Community Schools Board
of Education □

Quest Rewards Green-minded Students



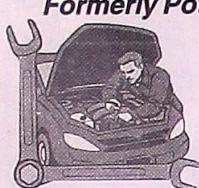
Quest Academy in Taylor is rewarding students who have been "caught doing something green." The school – which currently offers grades K-5, with plans to expand one grade each year up to the eighth grade – recognizes environmentally friendly efforts by students who perform small acts like reusing scrap paper, and rewards them with weekly drawings for small prizes. Recent winners were (youngsters, from left) Angelina Clifton, Billy Traster, Collin Reid, Markus Robinson, Dakota Smith, and Seth Leach. Also pictured are teachers Jessie Powell (music), Jennifer Beam (art), and Carolyn Woods (physical education).

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Taylor Water Department Moves to DPW

The City of Taylor has announced that, in an effort to consolidate and centralize staff, the Water and Sewer Department is moving its entire operations from City Hall to the Department of Public Works (25605 Northline Road, at Beech Daly).

Part of the Water and Sewer staff – field operations, for example – was already located at the DPW prior to the move, so moving administration, billing, and the rest of the department under one roof will benefit City operations, according to Water Department director Craig Lyon.

Personnel began moving this week, and all staff should be relocated to the DPW by March 15.

Lyon said there will be no change

in the level of service for water customers. Rather than driving to City Hall, residents will instead go to the DPW.

"Should a resident need to pay a bill, they will be able to do so at the DPW or at the Treasurer's Office at City Hall," he said. "However, if a resident needs to schedule a final water meter read or turn-off, or pay a tap fee, these activities will now be performed at the DPW."

To help communicate the move, there are various postings around City Hall indicating that the Water and Sewer Department is relocating. Water customers will receive a notice about the move in future bills.

The notice is also posted on the City Web site, www.cityoftaylor.com, and on the City's cable TV channel.

Taylor Meadows Golf Club To Offer Comedy Show, Buffet Dinner

Third Friday comedy shows are returning to the Greenside Grille inside Taylor Meadows Golf Club. Stand-up comedians Steve Brewer and Andy Beningo are set to perform on Friday, March 19.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. A buffet dinner begins at 7 p.m. The comedy show starts at 9 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 for the dinner and show. Admission for the show only is \$10. Tickets are available in the Pro Shop at Taylor Meadows (25360 Ecorse Road, between Telegraph and Beech Daly roads).

Opening act Andy Beningo is a Michigan native working his way up the comedy scene. Known as a lovable comedian who combines a lot of energy with hilarious observations about daily life, Beningo puts on a show for the entire family. A regular performer throughout the Midwest and Canada, Beningo has been cracking up audiences in comedy clubs, colleges, and even bowling alleys. His goofy antics recently landed him an appearance on Comcast On Demand.

Headliner Steve Brewer, from the "suburban side of Motown," delivers a performance filled with all of the power of a Chevy big block engine. With the passion of an evangelist at a summertime tent revival,

Brewer will discuss Jekyll and Hyde views on marriage, the American dream, religion, and life's little hypocrisies. The rising star's rapid-fire delivery is guaranteed to make audiences laugh. Brewer will slaughter topics considered to be sacred cows of society's heartland. Warning: Anyone looking for a politically correct, nonoffensive show should look elsewhere.

Visit www.TaylorGolf.com for information on the Third Friday Entertainment Series or other news at Taylor's golf courses.

Soul Food Dinner Honors Local Legends



The Romulus community's annual Soul Food Dinner, held for the first time at Progressive Hall, honored local African-American Legends (from left) Thelma Mathews, Marjie Butler, Horace 'Doc' Stephens, Ezell Wooden, and Willie Hester, who were interviewed by student reporters. The event, which took place February 24, also featured readings, instrumental and vocal music, dance, and a delicious meal served by local dignitaries. Photo by R. E. Kadau



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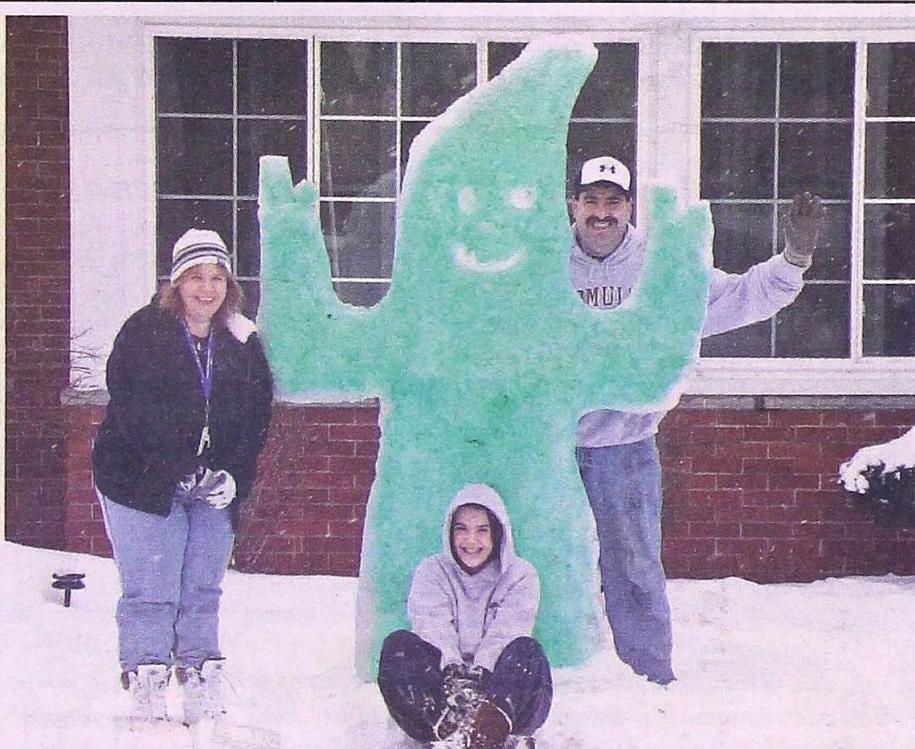
Donors of \$500 or more will be recognized on a memorial plaque.
Donors of \$25 or more will be recognized in a "book of friends."

Around Romulus

This beautiful photo was taken by 16-year-old Romulus resident Brandon Scott, who won first prize in the Nature (Age 13-17) Division of the Huron Clinton Metroparks and West Oakland Camera Club's 2009 Photography Contest. The competition was judged by camera club members, whose photographs have been published in Sierra Club, Audubon, and National Geographic magazines. The photos taken by Scott and nine other winners will be displayed at Metropark interpretive centers, and can also be viewed at www.metroparks.com. Winners' prizes included a plaque and a 2010 Metroparks vehicle entry permit.



Marie Charles (left) and Ella Mae Clark were among approximately 95 attendees who enjoyed the Senior Center's annual Valentine Luncheon on February 24. The event featured a visit from 25 Halecreek Elementary students, who made Valentines for the seniors. Photo by R. E. Kadau



Congratulations to (from left) Melissa, Paige, and Mike Gubaci, who won first prize in the annual Snowman Contest sponsored by the Department of Parks and Recreation, and received a \$20 Wal-Mart gift card. Photo by R. E. Kadau

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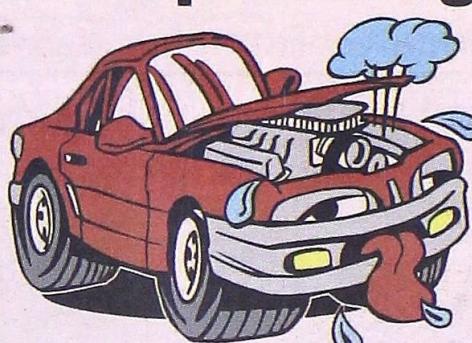
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Taylor Fire Chief Vince Fedel Retires



Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand (right) congratulated Chief Vince Fedel, who retired March 4 after 23 years as a member of the Taylor Fire Department.

Vince Fedel, a 23-year veteran of the Taylor Fire Department and the chief for the last four years, retired on March 4.

Chief Fedel said he made the decision after consulting with his family, saying he is ready for a less stressful lifestyle. His wife Connie is a yoga instructor. Fedel said he plans to pursue a similar career.

At age 45, Fedel is the same age as his father Joe was when he died from cancer in 1978. His goal has been to retire from firefighting when he could and pursue other activities in life.

"It's been inherent in me for 31 years now," Fedel said. "My dad died when I was 14. I'm now at an age when I can start a new chapter in my life and still have my health."

Fedel's father's death made quite an impression on him, and was "probably another reason" he was drawn to help people. He said he has always been driven toward service-oriented jobs.

Fedel was appointed chief of the 61-member department in February 2006. At 41, he was, at that time, the youngest fire chief in Taylor history.

Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand said Fedel's retirement was unexpected, and that there had been no prior discussion about him leaving. The Mayor said Fedel's contract expired in December, and the City had offered an extension.

"I would have been happy if he stayed," Mayor Lamarand said. "I would have welcomed the consistency in the Fire Department, and not had that challenge in front of me."

"He said it was a completely personal decision," Lamarand continued. "He thought about it, talked to his wife, and decided it was the right time. I'm happy for Vince. He has a great family. He's at a ripe young age, and has a new opportunity to venture off into life and spend time with his family."

Fedel has two sons, Jake and Andrew, and a step daughter, Kayla. He said that, in retirement, he's looking forward to attending all of his boys' hockey games and Kayla's cheerleading events. He also wants to get more involved in the Fish and Loaves Community Food Pantry, joining his wife in her volunteer efforts.

Fedel joined the Fire Department in October 1986 as an on-call auxiliary officer. He earned his EMT license at Wyandotte General Hospital and became a full-time fire medic in the department on July 4, 1988.

Promoted to sergeant in 1990 and to lieutenant in 1994, Fedel became captain in July 1999 and deputy chief a month later. Along the way, he was an engine operator, in charge of the ambulance, and the officer in charge of a fire scene.

As deputy chief, he attended the School of Staff and Command at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. During his career, he was active in the firefighters union, holding the positions of secretary, trustee, and vice president. He also sat on two bargaining committees and negotiated two contracts.

"I've enjoyed everything I've done in my career – especially the hands-on aspects of the job," Fedel said.

According to Fedel, the last four years have been marked by:

- a \$155,000 grant from FEMA, which will give firefighters 25 new sets of self-contained breathing apparatus.
- an improved relationship between the City and the Taylor School District, which enabled "Fireman Jesse" Kriebel to work on fire safety issues with school children on a full-time basis.
- greatly improved labor relations between the City and the Taylor Professional Firefighters Union. Fedel stressed that the improvements were "a two-way

continued on page 10

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Community Calendar

To place information in our next issue's Community Calendar, mail it to *the little paper* at P.O. Box 74038, Romulus, MI 48174-0038; FAX it to 734-992-2052; or e-mail it to thelittlepaper@comcast.net no later than 5 p.m. on Friday, March 19.

New Boston

Nursery To Host Open House

Huron Countryside Co-op Nursery – a nonprofit, nondiscriminatory preschool – is planning an open house to recruit three- and four-year-olds for the 2010/11 school year. Highlights of the nursery's program include tuition as low as \$60 per month, monthly educational field trips, a Christmas concert, and a graduation ceremony.

The open house will be held at the school (19109 Craig Street, in St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church) on Thursday, March 18, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m.

For information, or to obtain a preschool enrollment packet, call 734-753-5978 or visit www.huroncountryside.com.

Romulus

Free Tax Preparation Service

The Romulus Senior Center (36525 Bibbins Street) is offering a free tax-preparation service for residents with low incomes and those who are age 60 and older.

Volunteers trained by the IRS will be available *by appointment only* from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Friday through April 14.

Participants should bring all of the following (relevant) documents: last year's tax returns; forms W-2, SSA-1099, and 1099-R; statements of 401 income and unemployment compensation; child-care expense information; forms indicating income tax paid; and receipts/canceled checks (if itemizing deductions).

Call 734-955-4120 for information.

All-You-Can-Eat Fish Fry

St. Aloysius Catholic Church (37200 Neville Street) will hold all-you-can-eat Lenten fish fries from 4:30 to 7 p.m. each Friday through March 26.

Dinner includes your choice of baked or fried fish, macaroni & cheese, seasoned potatoes or French fries, green beans, cole slaw, dinner roll, dessert, and beverage.

The recommended donation is \$8 for adults, and \$4 for children 4 to 10. Children 3 and under eat free (with adult purchase). Three-piece carry-out dinners are \$8 each.

For information, call 734-941-5056.

Roast Beef Dinner Benefits Charities

Community United Methodist Church (11160 Olive Street) will hold its next Roast Beef Dinner fund-raiser on Saturday, March 13, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, corn, salad, dinner roll, dessert, and beverage will be available for a suggested donation of \$8 for adults and \$4 for children over five. Dine in or carry out!

For information, call 734-941-0736.

"Have a Heart for Humor"

For his senior project, Romulus High School student Ryan McLachlan has organized a comedy show, "Have a Heart for Humor," to raise money for the purchase of automated external defibrillators for the Romulus Fire Department. The show, a volunteer performance by Project 2 Improv, will be held on Friday, March 19, at the Metropolitan Hotel (31500 Wick Road), which donated its facilities for the event. Doors will open at 7 p.m.; showtime is set for 8 p.m. A cash bar will be available.

A suggested donation of \$10 (tax deductible) is the price of admission. Checks may be made payable to "City of Romulus-Have a Heart."

For information, contact McLachlan by telephone (734-941-3829) or e-mail ([rlinkratz92@yahoo.com](mailto:rinkratz92@yahoo.com)).

Hypnotherapy for Smoking Cessation

A one-day hypnotherapy session for smoking cessation will be held at the Romulus Athletic Center (35765 Northline Road) on Saturday, March 20, at 1:30 p.m.

Cost is \$25. Preregister by Thursday, March 18.

For information, call the Department of Parks and Recreation (734-941-8665).

Taylor

Craft and Vendor Show

A craft and vendor show fund-raiser will be held at Taylor Moose Family Center (9981 South Telegraph Road) on Sunday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will also feature a bake sale and raffle.

For information, call 734-414-0239.

Scrapbooking Party

Bring photos and supplies to work on your book while sharing ideas with other scrapping enthusiasts. The party – which will also feature a sale of Creative Memories products – will be held at the Recreation Center (22805 Goddard Road) on Saturday, April 10, from 12 to 7 p.m.

A cost of \$15 per person will cover pizza, pop, and snacks, as well as a raffle ticket for a basket of scrapbooking items. Preregistration is required. For information, call 734-374-3906.

Scrapbook Cover Workshop

Bring your scrapbook and a yard of fabric (your choice of pattern), and learn how to personalize your scrapbook's cover. The workshop will be held at the Taylor Recreation Center (22805 Goddard Road) on Thursday, May 6, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Cost is \$7. Preregistration is required. Call 734-374-3906 for information.

Coffees with the Mayor

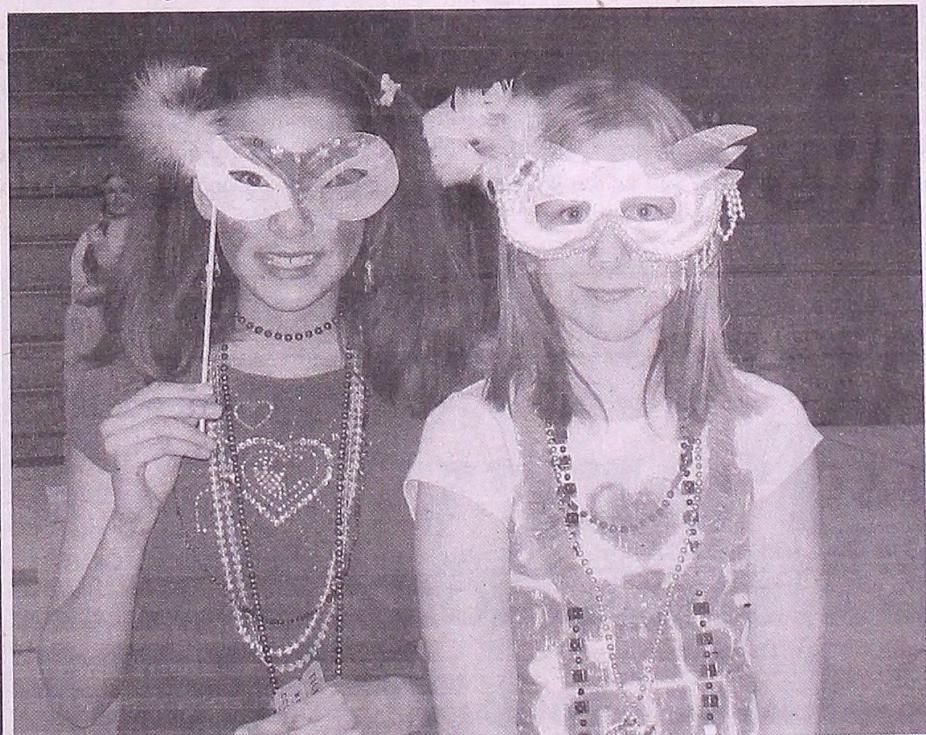
Mayor Jeffrey P. Lamarand's next "Coffees with the Mayor" program will be held at Isis Coney Island (26866 Eureka Road) on April 13 at 6 p.m. □

Recreation Director Receives Fond Farewell



On February 26 – her final day as director of the City of Romulus Department of Parks and Recreation – Kristin Irwin (right) received lots of hugs from people like Mary Ann Ryznar, who attended an impromptu get-together to wish Irwin success in her new job as executive director of the YMCA in Monroe. Recreation Programs coordinator Tanya Cofield has stepped up as interim director, while Ron Buckley is acting as part-time assistant coordinator. Photo by R. E. Kadau

St. Alfred School Celebrates Mardi Gras



Sixth-graders Alexandria Martinez (left) and Ashley Tufts showed off their festive masks during the Mardi Gras celebration at St. Alfred Catholic School in Taylor. The event featured games, prizes, and lots of colorful costumes.

Taylor Fire Chief Vince Fedel Retires

continued from page 8

street," and credited the union's executive board members for being willing to think "outside the box on a number of occasions." He noted that the firefighters now compete in several sporting events each year against Taylor police officers to raise money for Fish and Loaves and the police Holly McGeogh Memorial Scholarship Fund.

- having good grassroots connections with local civic organizations. In one case, members of the Rotary Club of Taylor raised funds for, purchased, and donated to the Fire Department an all-terrain vehicle for emergency use in large crowd settings. All the City had to do was buy a stretcher in the event that someone needed to be transported through a crowd to a waiting ambulance.
- an improvement in code enforcement in the fire marshal's division.
- an improvement in customer care. Fedel said fire medics respond to more than 6,000 medical calls a year and receive many compliments, all for "just doing their job."

"The customer-service aspect and the quality of care is as high as it's ever been in this community," Fedel said. "That's through nothing I did; it's inherent in the nature of our responders."

Despite serving as chief during tough budget times, and sometimes finding himself in the middle of disputes between firefighters and the City administration, Fedel said he has been proud to serve as chief.

"When I joined this great department, I would never have dreamed of being named chief," he said. "Twenty-three years ago, I walked through the doors and applied to the auxiliary department just to see if there was a job that would fit me. I know there are aspects of the job that I will miss."

Fedel recently completed a term as chairman of the Downriver Mutual Aid Fire Chiefs. He also served on a Wayne County Homeland Security organization. He said he enjoyed working with the staff of U.S. Representative John Dingell in trying to change the structure of the grant process.

The outgoing chief said he knows the Mayor faces the unenviable position of

making cuts to balance the City budget.

"I feel I'm leaving at a time when the Fire Department is clearly in a safe and respected position," the chief said. "And I would hope that any concessions across the City workforce are evenly shared."

He said the last contract accepted by the firefighters union shows that firefighters "are willing to accept concessions to assist the City in its budgetary woes."

"I'm sure if they are requested to come to the table," Fedel said, "they will come up with innovative ways of keeping their members working, thus providing stability and an income for all of those with families in the department."

"We sometimes take firefighters for granted, and don't realize that, after helping others all day at work, they have the same issues and stresses that we all have waiting for them when they get home."

Meeting with fellow firefighters behind closed doors to discuss their concerns about "life traumas and issues" has been an experience he will never forget.

"Responders out there are seeing things weekly and monthly that most people might see once in their lifetime," Fedel said. "They're dealing with that and going home and not wanting to share it with their wife or husband, and not wanting to tell their kids, all the while dealing with it. That takes a toll. That's why I'm a huge proponent of stress debriefing. I've been fortunate to have fellow firefighters trained by mental-health professionals so they can come in and assist firefighters through issues."

For the last five years, Fedel has been practicing Hatha Yoga. Wife Connie is the proprietor of Taylor Yoga. In April, Fedel will participate in a nine-week intensive training session in Bikram Yoga in Nevada.

Most important, he said, is for his family to get around the concept of Fedel being retired from the Fire Department. He may have created a family legacy. His youngest son Andrew wants to follow in his dad's footsteps as a firefighter.

"I'm still Vince Fedel," he said. "I always have been. I just happened to be fire chief. I didn't take the job for the pomp and circumstance. I always try to defer to the job the guys do." □

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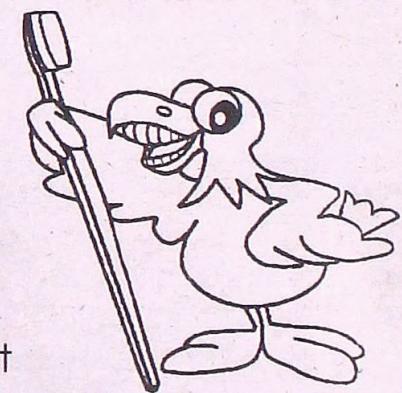
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Attach any additional information concerning the birth to this form.

ENGAGEMENT/WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT FORM

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City _____ State _____

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Groomsmen _____

Date of Engagement _____

Date of Wedding _____

Place _____

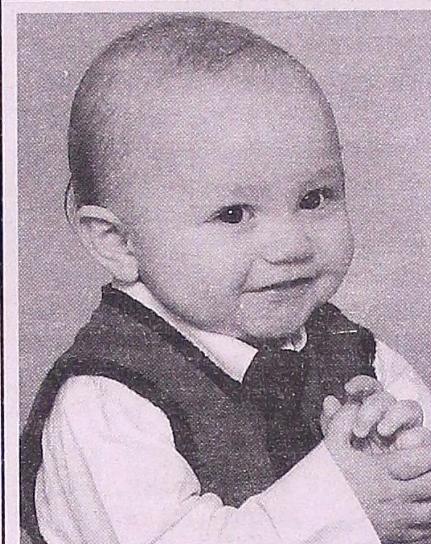
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Attach any additional information concerning the wedding or engagement to this form.

Happy Birthday!

Jeffery L. Green

Jeffery L. Green

Congratulations to Jeffery L. Green, who just celebrated his first birthday!

The son of Daniel Hopson and Shelby Green (Romulus, MI) was born on February 26, 2009.

Among those expressing their best wishes to Jeffery were his paternal grandparents, Jeff and Vicki Hopson (Allen Park, MI), and his maternal grandparents, Paul and Sandra Green (Romulus). □

**Obituary****Pauline Katherine Lewkowicz**

Pauline Katherine Lewkowicz of Romulus, Michigan, passed away on March 7, 2010, at the age of 86.

She was born to Michael and Josephine (Kusminski) Kotwica in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on September 15, 1923.

Pauline – who married John Benjamin Lewkowicz on November 8, 1941 – was a homemaker who raised a large family. When her husband was serving his country in World War II, she was employed at Revere Copper and Brass as a weighmaster, producing many sizes of copper bullets for the war effort. She continued to work a variety of jobs during her lifetime, concluding with a position as a cashier at Detroit Metropolitan Airport in Romulus.

After the war, the Lewkowicz family settled in Hamtramck, Michigan, but were forced to move in 1964 when Interstate 75 claimed their home. They purchased a farmhouse and several acres in Romulus.

Pauline had a large garden, and enjoyed

cooking for her family. She was a member of several service organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary, Post 9568 (Romulus).

Surviving Pauline are seven children, Stephanie (Larry) Kortz, Sherylyn Satterlee, Michael (Dawn) Lewkowicz, Mary (Joseph) Anderson, Mark (Candace) Lewkowicz, Paul Lewkowicz, and Steven Lewkowicz; 20 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews, as well as a sister, Irene (Frank) Immel, and a cousin, Krysyna Pytel, who resides in Poland.

She was predeceased by her husband of 49 years; an infant son, Joseph P. Lewkowicz; a son, John David Lewkowicz; and a sister, Elizabeth (Betty) Rutyna.

A funeral service, preceded by prayers at Crane Funeral Home (Romulus), was held March 11 at St. Aloysius Catholic Church (Romulus), with Father John Curran presiding. Interment was at Washtenong Memorial Park (Ann Arbor, MI). □

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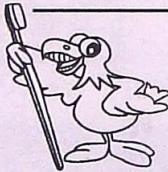
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